



The Institute of Formation Program
Fall and Spring Semesters 2021-2022:
September 7-May 26, 2021

The Institute of Religious Formation (IRF) at Catholic Theological Union (CTU) is traditionally a nine-month program that prepares women and men religious, appointed by their superiors, to learn the skills and study the components for preparing of new members of their congregations as they begin to live religious life. It is essentially a “train-the-trainer” model for religious formation.

The formation process for each congregation ranges from six to nine years with various stages of becoming finally professed. The extent of these formation components are guided by both Canon Law and Vatican documents, as well as the culture and charism of their religious order.

The purpose of the Institute of Religious Formation is to accompany new members of a religious congregation to learn and experience living in a community, developing a prayer life and deepening their spirituality. In addition, they study of the history of founders, the grounding of religious life and current developments relative to living the vows of poverty, chastity/celebrity and obedience.

The role of the director of formation is to provide the atmosphere for learning, to develop the program of speakers and activities, to mentor the participants and to assist in identifying the personal focus for each participant to become confident in working with their new members in the various phases of their religious vocation as they prepare for ministry.

The IRF program prepares women and men religious, who have been appointed by their superiors to become new directors of formation in order to effectively guide new members of their congregations as they begin to live religious life. The IRF curriculum includes both intensive study and skill-development.

IRF has used several methods to prepare our participants to successfully lead their new members. Our program of nine months includes presentations and interaction from knowledgeable professors and ministers, dialogue, intercultural living, self-reflection practices and formal research on current formation issues. Our curriculum includes classes each weekday in the areas of Scripture, Theology, Liturgy, Spirituality, Human Sexuality, taught by our CTU faculty as well as experts in Canon Law, Psychology and Human Development.

Presenting online classes provides us with opportunities to reach a larger group of potential participants with an adaptation of our Institute of Religious Formation program.

The basic content in Scripture, Theology, Spirituality, Religious Life and Human Development will be presented in an online format in a synchronous and asynchronous manner. Students will be able to listen to the recorded presentations at convenient times allowing for them to maintain their ministry positions and still take the required lectures which are essential for our program. In addition, students will be able to have interaction with one another, develop reflection groups and have time for questions and integration of the material presented online.

Course Description: The Institute of Religious Formation

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The purpose of the Institute of Religious Formation is to accompany new members of a religious congregation to learn: community life, developing a prayer life and deepen their spirituality, as well as study of the history of the founders and the basic grounding of religious life and current developments of living the vows of poverty, chastity/celebrity and obedience.

The IRF program prepares women and men religious, who have been appointed by their superiors as to become new directors of formation, to effectively guide new members of their congregations as they begin to live religious life. The IRF curriculum includes both intensive study and skill-development.

IRF uses several methods to prepare our participants to successfully lead their new members at CTU. Our program of nine months includes presentations and interaction from knowledgeable professors and ministers, dialogue, online intercultural companionship, self-reflection practices and formal research on current formation issues. Our curriculum includes classes each weekday in the areas of Scripture, Theology, Liturgy, Human Sexuality, taught by our CTU faculty as well as experts in Spirituality, Canon Law, Psychology and Human Development.

The program will be bimodal which provides both online and face to face presentations. The cost for the program is \$12,600. For those who need housing, there will be additional costs. Please contact Sister Lucianne Siers about the additional costs at Lsiers@ctu.edu.

Presenters

Dianne Bergant, CSA
Maribeth Howell, OP
Leslie Hoppe, OFM
Robin Ryan, CP
Steve Bevans, SVD
Antonio Sison, CPPS
Rev. Richard Fragomeni

Ed Foley, Capuchin
Helen Cahill, OP
Carol Johannes, OP
Janet Ruffing, RSM
Kevin McClone, PsyD
Donald Senior, CP
Barbara Reid, OP

Current Director of the Institute of Religious Formation

Lucianne Siers, OP of the Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids has directed the Institute of Religious Formation and the Hesburgh Sabbatical Program starting in August, 2018. Currently, she accompanies the participants from a number of congregations and diverse countries. She has also co-directs the program entitled Reframing Retirement for Mission.

In her role as Director of the Institute of Religious Formation she develops the educational components, plans the schedule of presenters, assists the participants in forming an intercultural community online, directs the program goals and assessments and supervises the final papers. She accompanies the participants daily for their 4 or 5-day per week classes and serves to mentor them in developing leadership skills and modes of accompaniment as the students grow in understanding their responsibilities of becoming new formation directors.